



County of Los Angeles
Department of Public Social Services

Bryce Yokomizo
Director

June 17, 2002

TO: Each Supervisor

Bryce Yokomizo

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

SUBJECT: **BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MOTION: L.A. COUNTY FOOD STAMP
ERROR RATE MONTHLY REPORT – APRIL 2002**

This is to provide your Board with the departmental progress report on the Los Angeles County Food Stamp error rate as of April 30, 2002. Representatives from the offices of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the Auditor Controller (A-C) have reviewed this report and concur with the information.

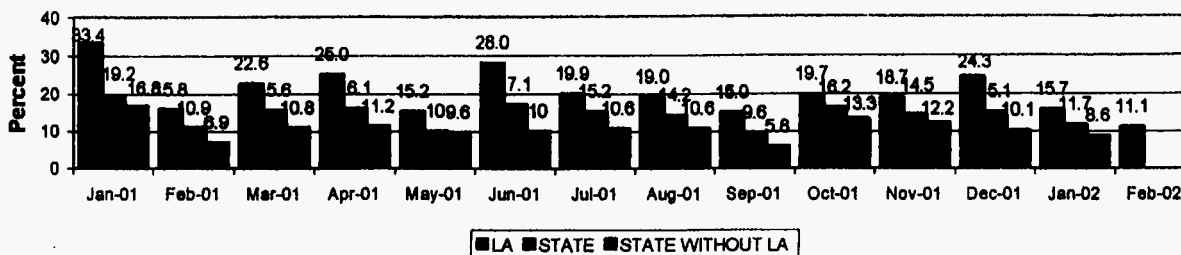
The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) released a notification to inform counties that due to the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) consideration of earners and non-citizens in the California Food Stamp Program caseload, the original liability amount of \$137,800,508 has been officially reduced to \$114,305,661. CDSS is still validating these amounts with the USDA. Our projected share of the sanction is \$88 million.

CDSS has asked counties to provide information that may assist the State in establishing a possible basis for appeal and/or settlement with FNS. CDSS has until July 8, 2002 for consideration of an appeal. We are working closely with our Statewide County Welfare Directors Association and CDSS to provide this information and to reduce the sanction amount to the maximum extent possible.

ERROR RATE

Based on the latest available findings from the California Department of Social Services, the Department's Food Stamp error rate for February 2002 is 11.1%. This represents a significant reduction of 13.2 percentage points from the 24.3% reported for the month of December 2001 and a reduction of 4.6 percentage points from the January 2002 error rate of 15.7%. Because the State audits are conducted several months in arrears, we hope to see a further reduction trend in our error rate by the end of the year.

The graph below displays the month-to-month error rate comparison between Los Angeles County and the average error rate for all other counties in the State of California through the month of January 2002. Statewide error rate information is not yet available for the month of February 2002.



The Department's cumulative performance for FFY 2001 is 22.9%.

PERIOD COVERED	L.A. COUNTY	STATE
October 2000 - September 2001	22.9%	17.4%
October 2001 - January 2002	19.2%	15.2%
October 2001 - February 2002	17.9%	

Source: CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

NEW INITIATIVES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

In my last report, I informed your Board that the trips to New York and San Antonio had been completed to identify the transferability of best practices to assist the Department in improving the Food Stamp error rate. The following actions are being implemented in Los Angeles County:

- **Performance Monitoring.** This activity is derived from the *JobStat* program in place in New York City, New York. It will provide the Department with detailed analysis of each district office's success rates in major areas of concern. A Task Force has been organized to identify areas and statistical information to be used for reporting.
- **Routine Questioning.** This activity is derived from a practice in San Antonio, Texas. The Department will have Eligibility staff routinely ask certain mandatory questions at every participant contact that will lead to improving case accuracy.
- **Motivational Posters.** These posters will be displayed throughout district offices containing various messages to encourage line staff.

In addition, the Department is evaluating the implementation of Central Call Centers. This activity is also derived from the Texas visit. It would provide participants with access to a single toll-free telephone number to leave important messages with regards to changes to their circumstances that would cause a change to their benefits. Dedicated staff would be selected whose sole function would be to retrieve the messages and process the reported changes, thus aiding in the reduction of the Food Stamp error rate.

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My intentions are to continue to provide your Board with monthly reports until the Department's Food Stamp error rate issues are resolved.

BY:ps

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Auditor-Controller